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AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. SOLIS) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer: Almighty God and Father of all, yesterday this Nation and the world quickened the living legacy of a great American and citizen of the world, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

May the Members of Congress and all Americans rededicate ourselves to his clarion call to work toward the Beloved Community he envisioned both at home and abroad.

Help us, precious Lord, to dissolve all prejudicial thinking and take practical steps to build peace rooted in equal justice.

At this hour of uncertainty, Lord, fashion leaders whose actions spring from the inherent counsel of Dr. King's living legacy. In charting the course for the national stability of Iraq, let Dr. King's dream of little black children walking hand and hand with little white children come true for little Shi'a, Sunni, Kurdish, Christian and Jewish children. From the southern plains around Basra to the northern plateaus of Ninnevah, someday soon let them sing: "Free at last. Thank God Almighty. We are free at last." Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPEALS FOR REDRESS FROM ARMED SERVICES

(Mr. KUCINICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, today I received a petition, an appeal for redress from over 1,000 active duty members of the armed services. Many of these honorable soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines have served in Iraq. They did not challenge their orders, they did not challenge their duty to

serve, they do assert their constitutional rights and their military code rights to speak with Members of Congress.

Article 3.5.7, Department of Defense directive 1325.6 provides the right of servicemembers to request redress and grievances against the actions of their commanders. The action taken and presented to me by individual servicemembers is an appeal for redress to end the war in Iraq.

Troops are risking their careers to present this message to Congress. They have all individually signed the following statement:

As a patriotic American proud to serve the Nation in uniform, I respectfully urge my political leaders in Congress to support the prompt withdrawal of all American military forces and bases from Iraq. Staying in Iraq will not work and is not worth the price. It is time for U.S. troops to come home.

SALUTING THE 218TH INFANTRY BRIGADE OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, on Saturday, January 7, South Carolina's adjutant general, Stan Spears, hosted the departure ceremony for the 218th Enhanced Separate Infantry Brigade. The event was attended by 10,000 appreciative family members and supporters.

The 218th Brigade is commanded by Brigadier General Robert Livingston. General Livingston and his wife Barbara's daughters, Rachel, Rebecca and Roxanne, led the national anthem at the ceremony. The brigade consists of 1,800 soldiers and will be in Afghanistan for approximately 1 year. Its primary mission will be to train Afghan national army and national police. This is the largest single deployment of South Carolina Army National Guard since World War II.

As a grateful 25-year veteran of the 218th and father of four sons in the military, I have the deepest respect and admiration for the men and women who put their lives at risk to protect American families. My thoughts and prayers are with them and their families. Our office is available at all times for servicemembers and families toll free at 1-888-381-1442.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September 11.

DEMOCRATS ACCOMPLISH MUCH DURING FIRST 2 WEEKS OF 110TH CONGRESSIONAL SESSION

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, as we begin the third week of this new Congress, it is important that the

American people know what we have accomplished so far on their behalf.

During our first week in session, we changed the rules on how this institution works, cutting ties between lobbyists and lawmakers, and reinstituting commonsense pay-as-you-go budget rules.

Last week we began our 100-hour agenda, passing four pieces of legislation that will help the American people live better and healthier lives. We increased the minimum wage for the first time in 9 years. We passed legislation giving the government the ability to fund promising stem cell research. We passed a bill that allows the government to negotiate better prescription drug prices for American seniors. We passed long overdue legislation instituting the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission that should make our Nation safer. And we are not finished yet.

This week we will make college more affordable by cutting interest rates in half on student loans and investing in biofuels by repealing unnecessary tax breaks to Big Oil.

Democrats are delivering on the promises we made to the American people.

TRANSIT FLEXIBILITY

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to highlight an issue of importance to many of our Nation's small- and medium-sized public transportation systems. Outdated population limits established in law in the seventies have caused many of these transit agencies to lose flexibility in the way they spend Federal funds. As a result, many of these systems, approximately 110 to be exact, will be forced to dramatically scale back their operations, and that means not having a ride to work for thousands of riders.

In the coming days, I plan to reintroduce the Transit System Flexibility Act. This bill will allow local officials flexibility in the way they spend their Federal funds and save them from having to shut down important bus routes. And it will not cost any additional taxpayer money.

Madam Speaker, local officials know their own needs best. This is a sensible solution to an urgent problem, and I hope my colleagues who represent one of these 110 small transit systems will cosponsor the bill.

DEMOCRAT PRESCRIPTION DRUG BILL IS BAD MEDICINE

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, it seems that the Democrats have a one-size-fits-all solution for all the issues facing our country: Big Government. According to the Democrats, the best thing